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# NEWS

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## From RICK AUERBACH

### LOS ANGELES COUNTY ASSESSOR

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### **STATE BOARD PRAISES ASSESSOR'S 99%+ QUALITY RATE**

The first state review of the Los Angeles County Office of Assessor in five years has given the department's work a 99.17 percent quality rating in managing a property roll containing 2.6 million assessments.

A State Board of Equalization report praised Los Angeles County Assessor Rick Auerbach for encouraging close cooperation between county departments and for a re-engineering project designed to upgrade assessment systems.

The Board, which oversees assessor operations in all of California's counties, stated that Auerbach and his staff gave "complete cooperation" during the audit process.

"Assessor Rick Auerbach continues to combine the latest in valuation technology with the best in public service," said State Board of Equalization Chairman John Chiang. "His emphasis on accuracy and fairness has resulted in the outstanding findings shown in this report."

The recently-completed review noted the State Board survey team found "no problems" in the assessor's administration of assessment appeals, nonmandatory audit programs (and) processing of business property statements..."

The report commended the department's handling of reappraisals when property changes ownership, the accurate processing of Proposition 8 applications when property values decline in value and the administration of the Land Conservation Act. A one-year training program for new appraisers was also complimented.

"This is a real credit to Rick Auerbach's leadership, and the work of his entire professional staff," said County Supervisor Don Knabe, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors Committee which oversees the Assessor's Department."

(more)



The State Board periodically reviews the performance of California's assessors and issues an Assessment Practices Survey Report which may also contain recommendations for change.

Findings included that:

- "The Assessor has an aggressive business property discovery program. This effective program has proven to be the best solution for tracking the county's sizeable business turnover."
- "More than 12,000 accounts (of \$400,000 or more) in business personal property are subject to mandatory audit (and) completed on a timely basis with high quality (and) concise narrative reports."

The report also focused on technical improvements made since the last survey, including electronic deed imaging.

Another indication of the department's effectiveness cited in the report was a decline in the number of appeals filed with the county's independent Assessment Appeals Board - with 110,000 cases filed for 1996-97 compared to 11,919 for 2000-01.

At the hearings, the report found assessor personnel "well prepared" with effective presentations. "We reviewed a number of appraisal records that were the subject of an assessment appeal," the report stated. "All were well documented and complete."

Auerbach congratulated all assessor employees for "the expertise and dedication to public service which resulted in this quality rating of over 99 percent."

"The survey is an invaluable, useful, and constructive tool and I very much appreciate the effort, professionalism, and courtesy of Board of Equalization staff," Auerbach said.

"We welcomed the objective review of the operations of this office and we agree with many of the technical recommendations. They will be implemented as quickly as possible," he added.

Auerbach was appointed Assessor by the Board of Supervisors in 2000 after 30 years as an appraiser and manager. He was subsequently elected to head the office which has 1,500 employees and a \$120 million budget.